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Items for information: energy statistics

Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-seventh session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics. The report describes the activities of the Working Group in 2005-2007, which is presented to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report of the Working Group.

* E/CN.3/2007/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 4* (E/2006/24), chap. I.B.

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Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics

I. Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics in 2005

1. The first meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics was convened by the International Energy Agency (IEA) on 22 and 23 November 2005 to discuss the status of cooperation between organizations on energy statistics and to explore ways and means to improve it.

2. The meeting was attended by 25 regional and international organizations. It gave the opportunity to all participants to share their experience in the area of energy statistics, to highlight similarities and differences, and to discuss individual or collective solutions to improve the overall situation, taking into account the need to reduce the burden passed to common member countries and economies as well as to the organizations themselves. A communiqué was released after the meeting (see annex I).

II. Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics in 2006

3. Until June 2006, IEA undertook to start collecting the information required for further work between organizations by contacting all the organizations that attended the first meeting of the Working Group. It requested from meeting participants a list of information related to their work on energy statistics (see annex II). As of 19 December 2006, IEA has received information from two thirds of the organizations and is still awaiting information from the remaining third.

4. There has been a delay in the process of the information received and the preparation of a website. One of the difficulties is the need to make the site as useful and user-friendly as possible. For instance, a user would have the possibility to see on one page all the definitions used by all the organizations for one particular flow/transaction or one particular product/commodity. The objective is to highlight differences as well as similarities. A quick review of what has been received showed that there are many more similarities than differences, which should make it feasible for all the organizations to work together on a harmonization process and lead to recommendations for harmonizing the definitions used by all the organizations. It is expected that the draft website design will be ready by January 2007.

III. Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics in 2007

5. After the launch of the website in January 2007, each organization will have a few months to comment on the overall site and on any particular item concerning their own information.

6. IEA will convene a second meeting of the Working Group in 2007, which will exploit the information gathered and identify concrete actions in each of the areas

already identified, such as harmonization, joint training material, joint training sessions and cooperation in data collection.

7. After the second meeting of the Oslo Group, which will take place in February 2007, the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics can work out an action plan for its second meeting, at which the outcomes of the Oslo Group meeting can be elaborated, avoiding duplications but further facilitating cooperation between the two groups.

IV. General comments

8. The main objective of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics is to improve the overall quality of energy statistics in terms of coverage, details, timeliness, reliability and relevance. Achieving this goal will enhance better cooperation between organizations. Much progress has been made over the last two years in terms of both bilateral and multilateral cooperation. For instance, the first Joint Oil Data Initiative training session (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, August 2006) and the joint Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)-IEA training workshop on energy statistics (Tokyo, October 2006) were organized; both of them can be cited as good examples of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Similarly, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and IEA are planning to organize training for Mediterranean countries in January 2007.

9. APEC has adopted questionnaires similar to those of Eurostat, IEA and the Economic Commission for Europe, and compatible with that of the United Nations Statistics Division. This is a first step towards a global harmonization of definitions, if not of questionnaires. The other positive step towards harmonization between organizations and some countries is the translation of the IEA/Eurostat *Energy Statistics Manual* into German, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.

10. The first meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics has created a momentum that some of the participating organizations have used to move their cooperation forward. However, more needs to be done to achieve the goals. The joint website could serve as a catalyst to further boost harmonization and cooperation. This is what the International Energy Agency, together with all organizations participating in the Working Group, will be working on in 2007.

11. The Statistical Commission may wish to take note of the present report.

Annex I

Communiqué of the first meeting of the Working Group on Energy Statistics

1. Twenty-four major regional and international organizations, either collecting or using energy statistics, convened in Paris at an International Energy Statistics meeting hosted by IEA on 22 and 23 November 2005. The objective of the meeting was twofold: to share experience and to explore avenues of further cooperation.

2. The organizations shared positive experiences and challenges encountered in the development and maintenance of strong and reliable energy statistics. Although there was a broad consensus to acknowledge improvements in the quality of energy statistics over the past five years, participants identified a number of concerns that must be addressed if those gains are not to be jeopardized.

3. Concerns and problems include low awareness and commitment at the political level, insufficient resources and expertise, and the need for more harmonization and cooperation. Moreover, new challenges await the energy statistics community, such as market liberalization and globalization, the monitoring of energy efficiency, the impact of bio-energy production, trade and use, the penetration of renewables and the monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions. The requirement for more detailed energy statistics is coupled with a push for increased timeliness and reliability of energy statistics.

4. The organizations discussed potential areas for future cooperation and harmonization in order to improve the quality of energy data. Actions need to be taken to sustain and improve the quality of energy statistics in the future. Building on successful cooperation and harmonization initiatives, such as the recent launch of the Joint Oil Data Initiative world database, participants agreed to:

- Seek stronger political will and commitment to increase the quality of energy reporting
- Strengthen the exchange of information and expertise
- Emphasize capacity-building and training
- Further harmonize methodologies, terminologies and definitions
- Meet at regular intervals on a rotational basis to review progress

5. In response to a call from the Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session, in 2005, two new working groups — the Oslo Group and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics — will explore ways and means of further improving energy statistics at the country and international levels.

6. Regional and international organizations are committed to undertaking these actions to meet the challenges faced by energy statistics. However, all parties, from energy industries to country administrations, must also match the commitment of the organizations with similar dedication and with the proper resources.

Participating organizations and bodies

African Energy Commission

Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation

African Petroleum Producers Association

Economic Commission for Europe

EURELECTRIC

Eurogas

European Commission/Statistical Office of the European Communities

European Environment Agency

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

International Atomic Energy Agency

International Energy Agency

International Energy Forum Secretariat

International Monetary Fund

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Organization of Arab Petroleum-Exporting Countries

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Latin American Energy Organization

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Statistics Division

World Bank

World Energy Council

World Coal Institute

Annex II

List of information requested from each organization

- A short description (3 to 4 paragraphs) of the organization, highlighting energy statistics; the main flows and products covered by the organization; the contact details of the statistics unit (address, phone, fax, e-mail and website). Access the page on the International Energy Agency website to have a better idea of what information is requested from all of the organizations.
- An electronic list of the definitions (flows and products) used by the organization (usually part of the questionnaires).
- A list of the documents (manuals, guides, questionnaires) published by the organization to ease the collecting, processing and understanding of its statistics, including the corresponding web link.
- A list of units for energy statistics used by the organization or that the organization thinks should be shown on the site.
- The links to the databases which can be accessed on the organization's website. If databases are arranged by type of energy, each link should be specified.